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Excess salt intake linked to higher risk of stroke

London: Intake of high amounts of salt is linked to much higher risk of strokes and cardiovascular disease, says a new study.

The study looked at the relationship between the level of habitual dietary salt intake and the occurrence of stroke and cardiovascular disease by reviewing 13 prospective studies from Britain, Japan, the US, the Netherlands, Finland and China

It included more than 170,000 participants, followed up for 3.5 to 19 years, who experienced nearly 11,000 vascular events.

The research was carried out jointly by the WHO's Collaborating Centre for Nutrition at the University of Warwick and University Hospital in Britain and European Society of Hypertension Excellence Centre at Federico II University Medical School in Italy.

The study provides unequivocal evidence of the direct link between high dietary salt intake and increased risk of stroke and cardiovascular disease.

A five gram lower daily salt intake would reduce stroke by 23 percent and total cardiovascular disease by 17 percent, thus averting 1.25 million fatal and non-fatal strokes, and almost three million vascular events worldwide each year.

The effect is greater, the larger the difference in salt intake and increases with time, said a WHO release.

Francesco Cappuccio, professor and head of the WHO Centre at Warwick Medical School said: "We have seen reductions in the salt content of several food items, due to the collaboration between governments, public health bodies and sectors of the industry on a voluntary basis.

"Habitual salt intake in most adult populations around the world exceeds 10 grams per day as against the WHO's recommended daily intake of no more than five grams," says Pasquale Strazzullo, professor and study author.

These results were published in the British Medical Journal.

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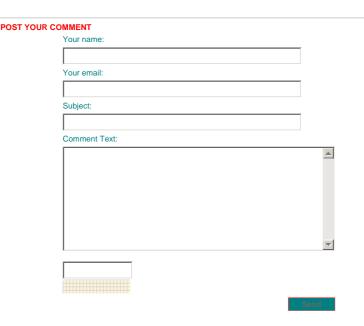
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